

Framed

By [Lynne Lancaster](#) artsHub | Friday, August 10, 2012



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Photo: Heidrun Lohr

Some will regard this new [work](#) by the De Quincey Company as powerful, hypnotic and entrancing; others will view it as too long and deadly boring. (There was considerable restlessness at the matinee I attended, but some were riveted.) Being a fan of the De Quincey Company, I am somewhat in the middle.

Presented by FORM Dance Projects as part of the Dance Bites season at Parramatta, *Framed* is performed in a very confined space – the cast are indeed 'framed', by a set consisting of a silver-grey picture frame. The latest in De Quincey's 'Embrace' series, and featuring extraordinary control and precision from the performers, it is more an experimental movement piece than a dance work as such.

It begins in blackout with ominous knocking – almost like the traditional three raps before the [start](#) of a performance at the Comedie Francais. In the specially commissioned score by Michael Toisuta, percussive rhythms are cyclically established, building from a solitary sound until in some sections it sounds like tumultuous rain or fast Flamenco beats, but with an Indian time count. Eventually all recedes back to the single note, and then silence.

In the tiny space of the silver frame, De Quincey and Hunt explore the paradoxes of relationships through miniscule yet emotionally intense changes. De Quincey wears a red leather jacket; Hunt is beautiful in a faux leopard skin top. They are linked for the entire performance. Sometimes they are back to back, at other times they slide right down to the bottom of the frame. One moment they stare challengingly at the audience, questioning us, the next they stare at something just beyond our line of vision. The audience's gaze is concentrated within the frame. There is no 'dancing' per se, we only see the top half of the body.

Facial expressions, therefore, are crucial. Heads are lovingly rested on shoulders, and a warm kiss on the cheek is rewarded by a luminous smile. There are flickers of mischievous fun contrasted with deep sadness. Maori nose greeting is developed into a fiery, wordless argument with distorted face and jaw and extended tongue. Hunt sometimes poses regally and beautifully, like a movie star having her portrait painted. For one startling moment De Quincey's hand stretches outside the frame – [drawing](#) us, the audience, in further?

Butoh/Bodyweather-like shifting of a hand or arm, or a change in the position of the head, is most important, and conveys volumes.

An intriguing work that challenges our perception of 'dance' and 'theatre'.

Rating: 3 ½ stars out of 5

Framed

De Quincey Co

Direction and Concept: Tess de Quincey

Performers: Tess de Quincey & Victoria Hunt

Set Design: Russell Emerson & Steve Howarth/Erth

Lighting Design: Emma Lockhart-Wilson

Sound Design: Michael Toisuta

Produced in partnership with Arts Radar

Running time: 40 mins (approx) no interval

Parramatta Riverside Theatres

August 8 – 11